

Message Text

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FOR THE SECRETARY FROM TOON

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, IS, EG, US

SUBJECT: AMOCO DRILLING IN GULF OF SUEZ

REFS: (A) STATE 225486, (B) CAIRO 12263, (C) CAIRO 12250

1. I MET WITH PRIME MINISTER RABIN AT 1500 SEPTEMBER 13 IN TEL AVIV; EVRON AND USUAL AIDES WERE ON HAND. I TOLD HIM I APPRECIATED HIS WILLINGNESS TO MEET WITH ME ON SHORT NOTICE BUT I WAS SURE HE WAS AS ANXIOUS AS I WAS TO SETTLE THIS DAMNED PROBLEM AS QUICKLY AS POSSIBLE. HE SAID HE AGREED AND THAT WAY IN WHICH SUEZ DIFFICULTIES HAD MUSHROOMED REMINDED HIM OF THE JEWISH PROVERB REGARDING A MOUSE GIVING BIRTH TO A MOUNTAIN.

2. I TOLD RABIN SECRETARY REGRETTE HE COULD NOT ACCEPT OUR PROPOSAL WHICH WE THOUGHT FAIR AND PRACTICAL. AFTER MAKING POINT CONCERNING AMOCO'S RIGHT TO DRILL BEFORE SEPTEMBER 21, I SAID THAT IN THE CIRCUMSTANCES WE AGREED TO MEET AS SOON AS POSSIBLE AND PROPOSED THAT TALKS SHOULD BEGIN THIS THURSDAY.

3. RABIN SAID HE AGREED TO THIS ON THE UNDERSTANDING THERE WOULD BE NO DRILLING BEFORE THEN. I SAID I ASSUMED THAT WOULD BE THE CASE BUT ALSO THERE MUST BE NO HARASSMENT OF AMOCO OPERATIONS RELATED TO EXISTING SITES. RABIN ASKED WHAT THAT MEANT. I REPLIED IT MEANT NO STOPPING OF VESSELS, NO INTERFERENCE WITH RE-LAYING OF BOUYS, NO INTERFERENCE WITH

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EXISTING OPERATIONS--EVEN IF THOSE OPERATIONS ARE EAST OF THE

MEDIAN LINE.

4. RABIN SAID HE COULD AGREE IMMEDIATELY THAT THERE WOULD BE NO HARASSMENT OF EXISTING INSTALLATIONS ALREADY IN OPERATION. HOWEVER, HE DID NOT WANT ANY MISUNDERSTANDING BETWEEN US AND HE COULD NOT COMMIT HIMSELF UNLESS AND UNTIL HE HAS A CLEAR UNDERSTANDING OF WHERE THE INSTALLATIONS ARE AND WHAT THEIR NATURE IS.

5. I AGREED THAT WE MUST KNOW PRECISELY WHAT LOCATIONS WE ARE TALKING ABOUT. WE NOW HAD THE COORDINATES OF PLATFORMS 1 AND 6 WHICH WE WOULD PLOT AND THEN COMPARE OUR INFORMATION WITH THAT AVAILABLE TO ISRAELIS. RABIN SAID IT DOES NOT MATTER TO HIM WHETHER THE INSTALLATIONS ARE EAST OR WEST OF THE MEDIAN LINE--WHETHER THEY EXIST AND ARE IN OPERATION IS THE QUESTION.

6. I SAID AMOCO WISHES TO REPLACE MARKER BOUYS AT PLATFORMS IN RAMADAN AND I WOULD ASSUME THIS OPERATION WOULD NOT BE HARASSED. RABIN SAID HE WAS NOT SURE. THIS WOULD DEPEND ON WHAT THE BOUYS MARKED.

7. HE THEN GAVE ME A REPORT ON HIS RECHECK OF THE INCIDENT ON SEPTEMBER 10: AN AMOCO SERVICE TUG PROCEEDED FROM THE MORGAN FIELD TO THE RAMADAN FIELD. AS IT CROSSED THE MEDIAN LINE HEADED FOR THE RAMADAN AREA, AN ISRAELI PATROL BOAT SIGHTED IT AND APPROACHED TO IDENTIFY IT. WHEN THE ISRAELIS PATROL BOAT SAW THAT THE TUG WAS A SERVICE VESSEL AND WAS NOT EGYPTIAN, IT MADE NO ATTEMPT TO STOP IT OR TO HAIL IT. HE SAID THAT THE ISRAELI PATROL BOATS ARE OPERATING UNDER INSTRUCTIONS NOT TO PERMIT EGYPTIAN BOATS TO CROSS THE MEDIAN LINE, NOT TO PERMIT NEW DRILLING OPERATIONS OR PREPARATIONS FOR SUCH OPERATIONS AND NOT TO SHOOT, EVEN AT BUOYS.

8. RETURNING TO THE QUESTION OF BUOYS, HE SAID THAT INTERNATIONAL LAW REQUIRES RESPONSIBLE AUTHORITIES TO SINK BUOYS WHICH ARE THREATS TO NAVIGATION AND THE ISRAELIS HAVE DONE THAT ON SEVERAL OCCASIONS IN THE PAST. IF BUOYS WERE NEAR EXISTING INSTALLATIONS, ISRAEL WOULD HAVE NO OBJECTION TO THEIR REPLACE-

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MENT BUT IT WOULD OBJECT TO AMOCO REPLACING BOUYS THAT ARE DESIGNED TO MARK AREAS FOR EXPLORATION PURPOSE. HE REPEATED THAT ISRAEL WILL NOT INTERFERE IN ANY WAY WHATSOEVER WITH EXISTING INSTALLATIONS OR OPERATIONS. HE SAID HE WAS SUSPICIOUS, HOWEVER, ABOUT THE QUESTION OF REPLACEMENT OF BUOYS. I SAID THIS WAS OBVIOUSLY A MATTER WHICH HE AND I COULD NOT SETTLE ON THE SPOT SINCE OUR INFORMATION SEEMED INADEQUATE AND EVEN CONFLICTING. I SUGGESTED THAT OUR ATTACHES MEET WITH

IDF OFFICIALS IMMEDIATELY FOR THE PURPOSE OF PLOTTING COORDINATES AND DEFINING PARAMETERS. RABIN AGREED TO THIS AND REPEATED HIS PRINCIPAL CONCERN: ISRAEL WILL NOT INTERFERE WITH WHAT IS PRESENTLY IN OPERATION BUT IT WILL NOT PERMIT ANY ACTIVITIES TO REPLACE MARKER BOUYS (PRESUMABLY THOSE LINKED WITH NEW OPERATIONS) OR TO RECOMMENCE EXPLORATION ACTIVITIES OF THE NATURE OF THOSE ON SEPTEMBER 4. UNDER THOSE CONDITIONS HE ACCEPTS THE OFFER TO BEGIN TALKS THURSDAY AND SAID THAT THE FOREIGN MINISTRY WOULD BE IN TOUCH WITH ME LATER TODAY TO INFORM ME ABOUT THE COMPOSITION OF THE ISRAELI DELEGATION.

9. IN CONCLUSION, RABIN SAID IT WOULD BE HELPFUL TO HIM IF THE PRESS COULD BE INFORMED OF OUR AGREEMENT TO HOLD TALKS IN WASHINGTON THURSDAY. I SAID I SAW NO OBJECTION. PRIME MINISTER FELT ANNOUNCEMENT SHOULD AWAIT NAMING OF DELEGATION.
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